

The curse of plastic

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Four years back Annie Leonard made a brilliant 20-minute film titled *The Story of Stuff* and put it on her website (www.storyofstuff.com) for free downloads. It found over 10 million viewers and it has been dubbed into many languages. The Hindi and Marathi versions can be watched and downloaded from youtube. This crisp, fast paced film peppered with animated cartoons has had a major impact in shaping environmental sensibilities. Every school, sensitive to the issue of the environment should download it and show it to the children. This film is in the public domain and should be dubbed in all our regional languages.

Plastic bottle – going full throttle

In 2010 Annie Leonard made a shorter 8-minute film titled *The Story of Bottled Water*. This has been viewed over 1.7 million times and can be downloaded from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se12y9hSOM0>

This film shows the unsustainable nature of bottled water and the greed of companies who peddle it. In many countries bottled water is less regulated than tap water. Many times what you get is packaged ‘tap water’ in a bottle. Is bottled water tastier? In taste tests across the country, people consistently choose tap over bottled water. These bottled water companies say they’re just meeting consumer demand. But who would demand a less sustainable, less tasty, way more expensive product, especially one you can get almost free in your kitchen? Bottled water costs about 2000 times more than tap water. Can you imagine paying 2000 times the price of anything else? Yet people in the U.S. buy more than half a billion bottles of water every week.

Eighty percent of these bottles end up in landfills, where they will sit for thousands of years, or in incinerators, where they are burned, and release toxic pollution. Bottle water companies use Alpine mountains on their labels, and seductive names to mislead us. In fact they are creating mountains of waste bottles. It’d be more accurate if they showed a mountain of plastic waste which their product creates. Bottle water companies scare us, seduce us, and mislead us. They use these core strategies to “manufacture demand”.

Roughly 50 billion plastic water bottles end up in U.S. landfills each year — 140 million every day! That’s enough, laid end to end, to reach China and back each day.

One billion water bottles a week are transported around the U.S. in ships, trains, and trucks.

Picture a disposable water bottle $\frac{1}{4}$ full of petroleum. That is how much petroleum it takes to make and distribute a single plastic bottle of water.

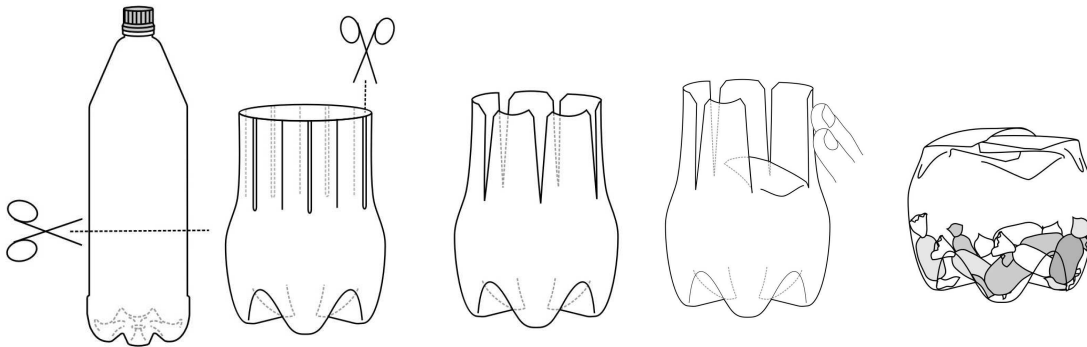
Bottled water is big business. But in terms of sustainability, bottled water is a dry well.

Plastic waste is now at such a volume that vast eddies of plastic trash now spin endlessly in the world's major ocean. This represents a great risk to marine life killing birds and fish which mistake our garbage for food.

Bottled water means less attention to public systems

Many people drink bottled water because they question the safety of their local tap water. This is like running around with a slow leak in your tire, topping it off every few days rather than repairing the puncture. Only the very affluent can afford to switch their water consumption to bottled sources. Once distanced from public systems, these rich consumers have little incentive to support better municipal water.

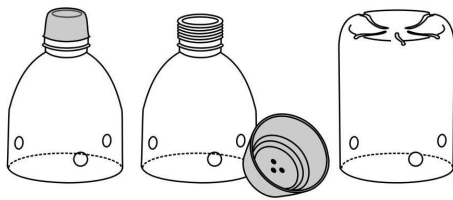
Bottle Box



You can make some wonderful things with old, throwaway plastic bottles. Pick up a large 2-liter Coke bottle. The Coke bottle has 10 vertical flutes on its cylindrical surface and is ideal for making a Bottle Box. Cut this bottle 15-cm from the base. Make 5 vertical cuts 5-cm long to make 5-petals. Cut the corners round with a scissors. The 5 petals will make a good lid. Close the petals one-by-one. They will shut with a snap. Place some sweets in this wonderful “Bottle Box” and gift it to a friend. See a short video on the bottle box

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qbA158xyB0>

Bottle Planters



Old bottles can also be used to make wonderful planters. For making a simple Bottle Planter you will need two old 1-liter bottles, strong string, scissors and a poker. Cut two conical tops and one base from two old plastic bottles. Make holes in the bottle lids to drain the excess water. Join the cut bottles as shown with a strong string. Place soil and grow plants. Hang the planter from a window sill. Don't forget to water it regularly. See a short video on how to make a Bottle Planter

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_NtihzkX8Q

